Demand IV—Excise.

MR. A. J. VAN ROSS: Sir, I rise to move for a grant not exceeding Rs. 3·55 lakhs on behalf of the Excise Department.

Motion 24.

MR. G. PARMESVARAN PILLAI: Sir, I beg to make the following motion:

24. To reduce the allotment of Rs. 18,687 under 4 A. Excise—Commissioner—Establishment by Rs. 1,000.

Sir, the expenditure under 4 A—Commissioner's office—has been increasing, although the salary of the Excise Commissioner himself has been reduced. In 1092, it was Rs. 42,000; in 1098 it is proposed to be increased by Rs. 11,826, although the pay of the Excise Commissioner is lower than in 1092. In asking for a reduction of Rs. 1,000 under establishment, my object is to draw the attention of the House to the bloated establishment in the Commissioner's office. There is an Assistant Excise Commissioner and there is also a Manager, both handsomely paid and beyond our reach. The Salaries Committee consisting of Messrs. Nidiry, Krishna Aiyangar, Raman Tampi, George, Paramesvara Aiyar and also Mr. Raja Raja Varma, was of opinion that the Commissioner's office need not have both a Manager and an Assistant Commissioner. Now, the establishment charges, as I have already stated, have been increasing from year to year. I should consider that it would be of no great prejudice to the Excise Commissioner's office if we were to reduce Rs. 1,000 under establishment so as to bring about the deletion of either the Assistant Commissioner or the Manager from his office. It is with this object that I bring forward this motion before the House.

MR. A. J. VAN ROSS: Sir, the request is that I should give up either the Assistant Excise Commissioner or the Manager.

There is a Circle Officer at present attached to the Excise Commissioner's office. Under the reorganisation he rises to the status of an Assistant Excise Commissioner like all the other Circle Officers. In all large offices, especially those of heads of departments, there are officers of sufficiently high status to help the chief officer in the discharge of his duties. When the head of a department has jurisdiction over the whole State and he has necessarily to be touring out very often, the necessity for a responsible Office Assistant is self-evident. My Office Assistant is directly in charge of the most important branch of my office, *viz.*, the abkari section. He is also personally in charge of the opium and *ganja* stores, besides having the control and supervision of other stores. He has to sign a large number of urgent and ordinary communications for the Excise Commissioner. He has personally to take steps at the proper time for the renewal of all abkari, salt and other contracts The preparation of all agreements and licenses relating to the various contracts has to be personally attended to by him. He is also the officer who has to draft rules, forms and instructions whenever changes are necessary. The department being one which brings in a revenue of over Rs. 80 lakhs under salt, tobacco, abkari and customs, changes in rules and forms—both important and ordinary—often take place.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

Page 1

[Mr. A. J. Van Ross.]

The office work in regard to abkari matters is growing with the introduction of the independent shop system from one end of the State to the other. Before the introduction of the independent shop system, a taluk had generally only three contractors—one for toddy, one for arrack and one for opium and *ganja*. With the introduction of the independent shop system, instead of three contractors, a taluk may have sixty or seventy contractors. The collection of a lakh of rupees from three individuals does not involve perhaps a twentieth part of the correspondence and watchfulness required for collecting a lakh and a half of rupees from sixty or seventy contractors of smaller means. An individual shop-holder who has to pay an annual rental of two or three hundred rupees to Government requires as much attention on the part of my office and other subordinates as a big contractor who has to pay a lump sum of twenty or thirty thousand rupees. The work of the abkari section is multiplied with the extension of the independent shop system. The present staff has to work overtime to cope with its work. This adds certainly to the work of the Office Assistant and he cannot and does not find time to have direct charge of other branches of the office. Such being the case, I am very sorry that I cannot accede to the motion to do away with the Office Assistant Commissioner.

The Salaries Committee has recommended the abolition of the Manager's place in my office. No reasons have been assigned by the Committee for the proposed abolition. In every big office a Superintendent or a Manager is necessary to ensure proper check over the work of the clerks. For example, a clerk prepares a note. Unless there is a guarantee from the Assistant—I have no time to read up the file myself—that they are reliable and correct, I cannot pass orders. I may also tell you that the Office Manager's place involves so many other items of work. There is a large volume of correspondence in my office, which will be evident from the number of communications received and despatched during the last three years!

Year.	Number of Communications received.	Number of Communications despatched.
1094	23,228	14,886
1095	19,222	15,164
1096	23,774	17,129

There is, besides, a large number of returns received. It is impossible to expect the Office Circle Officer to attend satisfactorily and efficiently to all this. The Manager, though a gazetted officer, is only the head ministerial officer and attends only to the routine work. It will be observed from what is stated previously that the Office Assistant has enough and more to engage his attention. He cannot therefore be

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

expected to devote close attention to the other branches of the office. For this purpose, another officer of lower status, but above the clerks, is essential. The following sections are under the Manager's supervision, *viz.*, (1) salt, customs and tobacco, (2) accounts, (3) establishment and (4) miscellaneous; and they represent about Rs. 60 lakhs. About 75 per cent. of the volume of correspondence shown above falls within the sections under the Manager's control. His duties are so heavy now that he is seldom able to leave office before 7 P. M. His retention is absolutely necessary.

Then the member referred to the proposals of the Salaries Committee. I have very great deference to that committee. But, as I have already stated, that Committee has given no reasons in support of its proposal. None of the members of the Committee are familiar with the nature and volume of the work in my office, and I was, therefore, apprehensive as to the nature of their proposals. Consequently I called on the President and requested him to examine me as a witness or to hear me informally before deciding about retrenchment in my department. But the Committee failed to comply with my request, and I submit, therefore, that its proposals should not be given any weight in view of the information now supplied by me.

In conclusion, I beg to submit that both the Manager and the Assistant Commissioner are absolutely necessary. They will watch over the revenue so that it may not fall. They will have to cope with the large volume of correspondence that comes in my office. And there must be an officer over thirty or fifty clerks; there should be a Manager. That is all I have to say about the Manager and the Assistant Commissioner.

MR. S. KRISHNA AIYAR: Sir, the Excise Commissioner has given us two reasons in the main. The first reason is that it has been the practice elsewhere to have a high officer as well as a Manager. The second argument advanced is that he has a large income—something like Rs. 80 lakhs that passes through his hands—and that it necessitates a very large volume of correspondence which two officers alone would be able to cope with.

So far as the practice elsewhere is concerned, I find, on a reference to the Mysore Budget, that there is provision there only for one Assistant Commissioner, and no Manager.

PRESIDENT: What is the amount of revenue in Mysore?

MR. S. KRISHNA AIYAR: Over Rs. 75 lakhs.

MR. K. GEORGE: They have no customs or tobacco.

MR. S. KRISHNA AIYAR: But they have the *ganja*-growing department and certain other departments.

Secondly, in respect of the office establishment over there, there are 52 hands and it costs only Rs. 14,808, while over here the establishment has only 46 clerks, but the cost is Rs. 18,687. So these two arguments do not seem to hold good. I would therefore strongly support the motion made by Mr. Parameswaran Pillai.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

[Mr. J. John Nidiry.]

MR. A. HOOGEWERF: Sir, I am quite in sympathy with what the Salaries Committee has said about the reduction of hands in the Excise Commissioner's office. The Committee might have learned the working of the office before they made their recommendation. I am also in sympathy with Mr. G. Paramesvaran Pillai.

During the administration of Mr. P. Rajagopalachari, (I was in service then,) a circular letter was issued instructing that there should be absolute decentralisation of the functions of the Excise Commissioner. Now I see an army of clerks in the head office; and the Excise Commissioner has been cataloguing a series of functions having to be done by himself and his clerks, his Personal Assistant and his Manager. I think the whole difficulty is brought about, because these functions, which were exercised by subordinate officers, particularly the Assistant Commissioners, are now centralised in the head office. The whole mistake is that of having such a big staff of officers. The Excise Commissioner should devote all his attention, *not* to issue licenses, and to this minor item or the other, but to wider matters. I was a Commissioner myself, and I hardly found time to sign the daily routine of papers from the Range offices, Circle offices and all sorts of people. There was a huge pile of papers on my table without being touched by any one. The whole thing is due to the rottenness of the system. I am in absolute sympathy with the Salaries Committee and with what Mr. G. Paramesvaran Pillai said, *viz.*, that such a big army of clerks is not necessary in the Commissioner's office. I shall speak in greater detail when my own motion comes up.

MR. K. C. MAMMEN MAPPILLAI: Sir, evidently as the retention of the Manager in the Commissioner's office has been carefully considered by the Excise Commissioner after the recommendation of its abolition by such a responsible body as the Salaries Committee was made, and in view of the fact that the Excise Commissioner has come to a definite conclusion in spite of the recommendation of the Salaries Committee that, in the interests of the department and its efficient work, the retention of the Manager is necessary, I, for one, do not want to press for the abolition of the Manager's post at least this year.

MR. J. JOHN NIDIRY: Sir, as a member of the Salaries Committee, I feel my position here rather delicate to-day. There was a hint from my friend, Mr. G. Paramesvaran Pillai, that our recommendations *in re* the abolition of the Manager's place were not heeded. There was also a hint from Mr. Van Ross that we, the members who constituted that body, did not know anything about his office work. I think I should not lose my balance by any of these hints in a matter like this. Though some of us had no personal knowledge of the working of Mr. Van Ross's office, I must say that we had his own report before us, as in the case of other departments, and that it was after a careful perusal of that report and other records that we submitted our report. So, I do not know how far he is correct in condemning us for not recommending his suggestion for a Manager.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

PRESIDENT: He does not condemn you.

MR. T. K. VELU PILLAI: Sir, I rise to a point of order. I do not know whether the member is in order when he refers to the Salaries Committee. That question does not arise here.

PRESIDENT: That does arise inasmuch as it has been referred to by other members.

MR. J. JOHN NIDIRY: Still, I must concede that, of all heads of departments, the Excise Commissioner has been good enough to effect considerable retrenchment in the officers and the establishment of his department. Although our recommendations as to the abolition of the Managership was not accepted by Government, I think the Government and Mr. Van Ross had very good reasons to have the Manager also in the Commissioner's office. As the reorganisation sanctioned on the recommendation of the Salaries Committee has only just begun to work, I think it would be fair on our part to give it a trial for some time.

MR. K. P. RAMAN PILLAI: Sir, I may be allowed to point out that Mr. Van Ross has not advanced—although he may have very good reasons—any reasons why he should have such a large staff, consisting of one Manager, one Assistant Commissioner and 32 clerks, for the conduct of business in his office. He tells us that there is a large body of merchants in Travancore, who apply to him for information. But I am not prepared to believe that he is keeping up regular correspondence with all the contractors and merchants in Travancore. Further, he said he had to pass orders relating to money. But I may point out that the Conservator, who has also to deal with matters relating to money, manages with 22 clerks. The Police Commissioner, whose orders relate to the life and property of His Highness the Maha Raja's subjects, is managing with 34 clerks, with whom we shall have to deal later on. The Darbar Physician has 10 and the Director of Agriculture 17 clerks. Under these circumstances, I venture to think that the unusually large number of clerks required in the Excise Commissioner's office is due to the large number of divisions that he insists upon having. While, in the Forest Department, there are six divisions, the Revenue four, and the Police three, the Excise Commissioner has *thirteen* Excise divisions. Now, of course, he has to keep up regular correspondence with his thirteen Assistant Commissioners and so naturally he must have an increased staff. But I submit that, with a recasting, he could easily reduce his divisions into four by the amalgamation of certain Circles. For these reasons, I support Mr. Parameswaran Pillai's motion.

RAO BAHADUR K. A. KRISHNA AIYANGAR: Sir, the President of the Salaries Committee is a member of this House and I leave it to him to vindicate his conduct in not having afforded to the Excise Commissioner the opportunity that he sought for a personal explanation to the members of the Committee of the inner working of his department. I concede that the Committee was a purely advisory body and that the Government can go behind its recommendations; but, as a

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

[Mr. T. Kumara Pillai.]

member of that Committee, I strongly object to the attempt of the Excise Commissioner to belittle its conclusions on the score of lack of knowledge of the non-official members of the inner working of the departments of the public service. Government experts were on the Committee. A few non-officials were put in to examine the questions from the standpoint of the general tax-payer—from the standpoint of laymen interested in the general well-being of the State. Departmental reports and recommendations were before the Committee. The notes prepared by the President of the Committee on the working of the different departments, as Efficiency Audit Officer, were also available to the Committee. On these materials the Committee arrived at certain definite conclusions, one of which was that heads of important departments, instead of relying on head clerks and managers, should be provided with the best expert technical help they could get from their subordinates, such as an Assistant Engineer in the Chief Engineer's Office, an Assistant Commissioner in the Excise Commissioner's Office, and an Assistant Surgeon in the Darbar Physician's Office, and, as a measure of general retrenchment, the Committee recommended the abolition of the office of Manager in the Excise Commissioner's office. The Excise Commissioner is apparently not prepared to accept these proposals. In the present state of our finances, the appointment is a distinct luxury. The adoption of the motion before the House may not lead to the abolition of the office as it is a non-votable item, but if the motion is pressed to a division, I should support it as indicative of the general sense of the House against the retention of the office.

MR. G. PARAMESVARAN PILLAI: Sir, one word of explanation. My friend, Mr. Krishna Aiyangar, is mistaken as regards the effect of this motion when passed. When the motion is discussed on the basis that the Manager's post is not necessary and when the House approves of it, the effect will be that the Manager's post will have to be abolished. The Managership being a non-votable item, this is the only way in which we can approach it. We do not proceed on the basis that the reduction should prejudicially affect the poor clerks. We proceed on the basis that the Manager's post should be abolished and this is the procedure ordinarily recognised in other legislatures on similar questions.

MR. T. KUMARA PILLAI: Sir, എക്സൈസ് കമിഷണരുടെ ആഫീസുമാനേജരെ കുറയ്ക്കണമെന്നതായ നന്നുള്ള അഭിപ്രായത്തോട് ഞാൻ യോജിക്കുന്നു.

ഈ പ്രമേയത്തിൽ ആഫീസ് മാനേജരുടെ ശമ്പളം വിഷയമായ ഫ, ങ ഠ ത്രുപ്പ കൂടി കുറയ്ക്കുന്നതിൻ നിർദ്ദേശമുണ്ട്. എക്സൈസ് കമിഷണരുടെ ആഫീസ് ഭരണത്തിന് ഒരു അസിസ്റ്റന്റ് കമിഷണരും ഒരു മാനേജരും ഒഴിച്ചു കൂടാൻ പാടില്ലാത്തതാണെന്ന് അദ്ദേഹം വാദിക്കുന്നു. എക്സൈസ് കമിഷണരുടെ വാദം കേട്ടതിൽ ഈ രണ്ട് ഉദ്യോഗസ്ഥന്മാരും ഇല്ലാത്തപക്ഷം ഇപ്പോഴുള്ള വിധം ആഫീസു ഭരണം നടത്താൻ അദ്ദേഹത്തിൻ ശക്തിയില്ലെന്നോ, അല്ലാത്തപക്ഷം അപാകമുണ്ടെന്നോ വ്യക്തമാക്കിയതായി

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

അദ്ദേഹത്തിനു മടിയില്ലെന്നോ അനുമാനിക്കേണ്ടിയിരിക്കുന്നു. ഇവിടത്തെ പബ്ലിക്ക സർവീസിലുള്ള ഉദ്യോഗങ്ങൾക്കു ബ്രിട്ടീഷിലെ ശമ്പളത്തോളമില്ലെന്നും, അതു കഷ്ടമാണെന്നും ഒരവസരത്തിൽ മിസ്റ്റർ സുബ്ബയ്യർ വാദിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു. അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ വാദം ഒരു നിലയിൽ ശരിയാണെന്നു സമ്മതിക്കാം. എന്നാൽ ഇവിടത്തെ ഉദ്യോഗങ്ങളുടെ എണ്ണത്തെപ്പറ്റി മിസ്റ്റർ സുബ്ബയ്യർ ആലോചിച്ചിട്ടുള്ളതായി തോന്നുന്നില്ല. എന്നു മാത്രവുമല്ല ഇപ്പോൾ ഇവിടെ ഉദ്യോഗസ്ഥന്മാർ വാങ്ങിവരുന്ന ശമ്പളങ്ങൾക്കു തക്കവണ്ണം അവരെക്കൊണ്ടു വേലചെയ്യിക്കേണ്ട ആത്യാവശ്യത്തെയും അദ്ദേഹം വിസ്മരിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു. ഈ ചെറിയ രാജ്യത്തുള്ള എക്സൈസ് വകുപ്പിനെ ഒരു ഉന്നതമായി എടുക്കുന്നപക്ഷം അതിൽ ഒരു കമിഷണറും, ഫസ്റ്റ് അസിസ്റ്റന്റ് കമിഷണറന്മാരും, ഒരു ഇൻസ്പെക്ടറന്മാരും, സബ് ഇൻസ്പെക്ടറന്മാരും ഉണ്ട്; അവർക്കു ബ്രിട്ടീഷിലെ തോളുകളനുസരിച്ചു ശമ്പളം കൊടുക്കുന്നതായാൽ ആ വകുപ്പിലെ വരവിൽ പ്രധാനഭാഗവും ശമ്പളച്ചിലവുകൾക്കായി വിനിയോഗിക്കേണ്ടിവരുമെന്നുള്ളതാണ്. ബ്രിട്ടീഷിലെശമ്പളക്രമം ഇവിടെയും നടപ്പാക്കണമെന്ന് ആഗ്രഹിക്കുന്നപക്ഷം നമ്മുടെ രാജ്യത്തിനു തക്കവണ്ണം വിസ്തീർണ്ണതയുള്ള ബ്രിട്ടീഷിലെ ഒരു ഡിസ്ട്രിക്ടിലുള്ള ഉദ്യോഗങ്ങളുടെ എണ്ണമാക്കി ഇവിടെയും കുറച്ചുകിൽ മാത്രമേ അതിനു സാധിക്കയുള്ളു എന്ന് മിസ്റ്റർസുബ്ബയ്യർ അറിയേണ്ടതാണ്. ഈ രാജ്യത്തെ ഉദ്യോഗങ്ങളുടെ എണ്ണത്തെ ആവശ്യത്തിൽ കൂടുതലായിവർദ്ധിപ്പിച്ച് അവക്കെല്ലാം ബ്രിട്ടീഷിലെ ശമ്പളങ്ങളും കൊടുക്കണമെന്നുള്ള അഭിപ്രായം ഒരിക്കലും സ്വീകാര്യോന്മുഖമായിട്ടുള്ളതല്ല അതിനാൽ ഇവിടത്തെ പബ്ലിക്ക സർവീസിൽ ആവശ്യത്തിൽ കൂടുതലായുള്ള ഉദ്യോഗങ്ങളെ കുറയ്ക്കേണ്ടതു ഒഴിക്കുവാൻ പാടുള്ളതല്ല. എക്സൈസ്ഹെഡാഫീസിൽ ഒരു അസിസ്റ്റന്റ് കമിഷണർ ഉള്ളപ്പോൾ അതിനും പുറമെ ഒരു മാനേജരുടെ ആവശ്യം ഒന്നുകൊണ്ടും ന്യായമായി തോന്നാത്തതുകൊണ്ട് ആ ഉദ്യോഗം കുറയ്ക്കേണ്ടതു അത്യാവശ്യമാണെന്നു ഞാൻ അഭിപ്രായപ്പെടുന്നു.

MR V. SUBBA AIYAR: Sir, the proposal before the House is that Rs. 1,000 should be reduced out of a votable demand, and the argument that was advanced by my learned friends on the other side of the House is that the Manager's post should be abolished The pay of the Manager is a non-votable item. I may be permitted to place before the House the practice obtaining elsewhere in such cases. If we are concerned with the reduction of a non-votable item, the proper method is to pass a resolution in the next session and place it before the Government. So far as we are concerned at present, the object of every motion before the House should be either to reduce the budget demand or to seek for information or offer criticisms in regard to the administration of a particular department, so that the Government may take the necessary action if they think it fit to do so. If I understand the views of the members aright, I believe that the object of the motion is to discuss a non-votable item, and it is one, as my friend Mr. Krishna Aiyangar pointed out, that could not be passed by this House. The effect of accepting the motion before the House will be that the Manager's post cannot be abolished, but the reduction will have to be made from contingencies or other items. That will not serve the real purpose the mover has in view. Having had a fair discussion of the matter, I hope the mover will withdraw his motion and leave the matter to the Government to take such action upon as they think fit.

MR. T. K. VELU PILLAI: I do not propose to speak on the question now before the House. Although there is a consensus of opinion among the members on this side of the house on the question now being

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

[Mr. G. Parameśvaran Pillai.]

discussed, and although the official members, so far as may be judged from their speeches, are not against the proposal made, there is Mr. Subba Aiyar coming forward with strained technical objections, and attempting to strangle the proposal altogether. We all know we cannot vote on a non-votable item. The object of the motion was only to bring this matter within the orbit of discussion. It is unfair on the part of the Law Member to insist on having his pound of flesh, when the Dewan himself as President is placing liberal interpretations on the letter of the Regulation.

MR. V. SUBBA AIYAR: I do not think I was unfair at all.

MR. T. K. VELU PILLAI: He is learned in the law and his words are bound to have effect. That was the reason why I stood up. Now that he affirms that he does not want to be unfair, I would drop the matter.

MR. P. K. NARAYANA PILLAI: Sir, I have only one word. The recommendations of the Salaries Committee have not had a trial. It is better in that view of the matter to give a trial to the recommendations of the Committee instead of yielding to the *a priori* arguments put forward before the House. I support the motion.

MR. G. PARAMESVARAN PILLAI: Sir, by way of reply, I wish to say only one or two words. The Excise Commissioner pointed out that the Assistant Excise Commissioner who is attached to his office was engaged in attending to the opium and *ganja* sections, the renewal of abkari contracts, etc. What, then, will be the work of the Excise Commissioner? He has to attend to the revision of the Abkari Regulation, the drafting of letters, etc. Now he ought to attend to them hereafter and the Assistant Excise Commissioner will only help him in the matter. He may be put in charge of salt, tobacco and customs.

The Commissioner said that 75 per cent. of the correspondence had to be looked into by himself. It is the fault of his own system. The defect lies in the fact that he has centralised the administration of the department in his office, which not only militates against the entire system of administration, but also against the possibility of working it at all. It is not humanly possible for the Excise Commissioner every day to look into the returns of diaries. If they have accumulated for months together, it is the fault of the system and I am sure he will try to improve it.

As for the Manager's place, Mr. Subba Aiyar has pointed out that, since the matter has been discussed in the House, it may be better to leave it to Government for taking the necessary action. I could very well have accepted this, if Mr. Subba Aiyar had been the Government. If he had said, on behalf of the Government, that he was willing to reconsider this matter and see that the Manager's place would be regarded as liable to be abolished, I could accept it. But neither the Excise Commissioner nor the Law Member in this House is competent to give an assurance on that matter. Unless this House

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divides itself in regard to this matter and makes a recommendation proceeding as the result of the discussion to Government, they can do whatever they please. There is absolutely nothing lost by adopting this motion.

MR. V. SUBBA AIYAR: Sir, I never wanted to speak on behalf of the Government in this particular matter.

MR. A. J. VAN ROSS: Sir, the chief argument adduced on the other side of the House is that, owing to the concentration of work in my office and the centralisation of powers, there is heavy work, that the presence of an additional officer has been consequently found to be necessary, and that, if I had decentralised, the Manager would not have been needed. The system has been going on for the past twelve years like this. I took charge of the department only a year ago. The reason for centralising the work in my office is that my office has to attend to a great deal of work connected with many taluks where the independent shop system has not been introduced. Wherever this system has been introduced, the work has been reduced. By decentralisation the only result will be that a few clerks who are now in my office will have to be sent out to do the work in the Division offices. The work has to be done in my office or in the Divisions. At present, owing to excessive work I am also suffering ; but it is necessary in the interest of revenue till all the taluks are settled and the difficult points are straightened out. There are five or six taluks more in which the new system has to be introduced. These taluks have not yet been developed in regard to their revenue. Hence it was found necessary by my predecessor to centralise the work in the head office so that we may have greater watch over them. It is a matter of revenue for which all the members are anxious. It will not be well for me to come and say before this House next year that, owing to the abolition of this system, the revenue has fallen. That will not please the members. I am only anxious that the revenue should not suffer especially this year when there is so much of temperance unrest and when there are so many unsatisfactory cases as regards tapping, etc. I want more men everywhere, as I am getting more and more anxious and as the correspondence work, etc., are increasing.

Then as regards the Salaries Committee, Mr. P. K. Narayana Pillai has said that the proposals of that Committee may be tried. It is very dangerous to make that trial. Though my report was before the Committee, it has not said a word about it, which it would have done, if it has had considered it. Unless the House presses upon my giving it up, I would have the grant. It is very necessary.

PRESIDENT: That is the motion before the House.

MR. A. J. VAN ROSS: I am afraid I cannot give up. But with very great misgiving, I will give the proposal a trial.

MR. G. PARAMESVARAN PILLAI: Sir, on the assurance that the Excise Commissioner will work without the Manager, I withdraw my motion.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

[Mr. T. K. Velu Pillai.]

The motion was, by leave, withdrawn.

MR. G. PARAMESVRAN PILLAI: Sir, may I know what time is allotted for the discussion of this demand?

PRESIDENT: The maximum time allotted to this demand is two and a half hours.

Motion 25.

MR. T. K. VELU PILLAI: Sir, I beg to make the following motion:

25. To reduce the allotment of Rs. 15,000 for equipment and clothing under 4 A. Excise—Commissioner—Supplies, Services and Contingencies, by Rs. 3,000.

The allotment in 1096 was Rs. 13,000 and odd, and in 1097, Rs. 15,350. After the termination of the war and the conclusion of peace, it is well-known that the markets in the world are going down to their normal condition, and as a consequence thereof the prices of almost all necessary articles have decreased. We also learn that articles of clothing have gone down in price. There is the further fact that the Excise Commissioner has proposed to reduce the number of hands in his department. For these two reasons, I trust that the Excise Commissioner will be able to consent to this reduction I do not want to fetter the discretion of heads of departments like the Excise Commissioner. All that I wish him to do is to look into the matter in the light of my observation and tell the House if he could reduce the amount.

MR. A. J. VAN ROSS: Sir, I accept a cut of Rs. 3,000.

The motion was carried.

Motions 26 to 29.

The following motions were not made:

MR. G. PARAMESVARAN PILLAI:

26. To reduce the allotment of Rs. 800 for office expenses etc. by Rs 100.

MR. T. KUMARA PILLAI:

27. To reduce the allotment of Rs. 43,900 for Commissioner by Rs. 4,800.

MR. A. GOVINDA MENON:

28. To reduce the allotment of Rs. 43,900 for Commissioner by Rs. 4,000.

MR. G. PARAMESVARAN PILLAI:

29. To reduce the allotment of Rs 30,144 for establishment by Rs. 1,000.

Motion 30.

MR. T. K. VELU PILLAI: Sir, I beg to make the following motion:

30. To reduce the allotment of Rs. 11,503 for petty construction and repairs under 4 B. Excise—Division officer—Supplies and Services and Contingencies, by Rs. 5,000.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

I learn that this money is sought to be employed in putting up officers' quarters and other buildings at Arukutty. No doubt, Arukutty is an unhealthy place. It is important to remember that Arukutty has always been considered to be an important excise station. High-paid officers have been in Arukutty for the past 100 years. They have not found it impossible to live there without official quarters. I learn that it is quite possible to get accommodation for high-paid officers. Sir, I learn that some work has already been done towards the construction of the officers' quarters there. I learn that there was some difficulty in the work itself because it was not done according to the estimates, and that the work has therefore to be done again after pulling down the original construction. I also learn that the mattter is before the Government. The money of the tax-payer should be utilised only if the buildings under contemplation are absolutely necessary and if the advantages prospected for are adequate to the expenditure. I would also tell the House that accommodation is required, not for high-paid officers like the Assistant Commissioner, but for the poor peons and other low-paid men. All of us know the deep blue surging waters of the Arukutty lake that encircle the place. The peon, if he wants any article of food, must himself go out in raging storms and torrential rains. If the peons and the petty officers live in one place, in lines provided by Government, mutual help may be obtained and without it life is very difficult in that inhospitable locality. On the other hand, the Assistant Excise Commissioner can always indent upon the services of his subordinates, clerks, petty officers or peons, all his neighbours and a multitude of other people, for he has authority over his subordinates and a well-known patronage which he can always dangle before an increasing band of aspirants. Now if Government are desirous of giving accommodation, I wish that they would give it to the poor peons and petty officers in preference to the Assistant Excise Commissioner. There is another aspect of the question, which has to be remembered in this connection. If Government are prepared to give suitable accommodation to officers in all localities, the result will be that private capital will fight shy of such enterprises. That is not a result upon which the Government will ever think of congratulating themselves. For these reasons, I move that the allotment be reduced.

MR. A. J. VAN ROSS: Sir, I find that the objection of the member is in regard to the building for the Assistant Commissioner and not for the staff.

MR. T. K. VELU PILLAI: For the officers *and* the staff. The staff is better paid than the peons.

MR. A. J. VAN ROSS: We have not provided quarters for the clerks. We are only providing quarters for the Assistant Commissioner. I am afraid Mr. Velu Pillai has not understood the real situation. It is absolutely necessary for the officer to live on the brink of the lake very near the chowkey. This is necessary because the officer should safeguard the customs revenue. Therefore the chowkey building is very necessary.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

[Mr. T. K. Velu Pillai.]

Mr. Raman Pillai, the retired Excise Commissioner, himself recommended this building 14 years ago. It has been in contemplation for such a long time. The estimate was sanctioned, however, sometime after; but the trouble was that there was no money and the matter had to be put off till I persuaded the Government to take it up. The Assistant Commissioners have always been agitating for this. I have been there for three years. I spent money from my own pocket. I always feared that I would lose the money, if I was transferred. No officer will therefore invest any money even for a small house there. I have put up my own building. I thought I would lose it and lose my health also. That is one reason. Another reason is that the peons have to live near the chowkey to watch the large number of boats moving along and realise the customs revenue. You cannot live in a building three miles away from the frontier. Hence it was that this building was considered absolutely necessary. As for the peons and petty officers, my friend, Mr. Velu Pillai, does not object. This is a necessity; but if you do not provide quarters—of course, we may get rent,—no officer will come and live in such an unhealthy place as Arukutty. A sum of Rs 4,000 has already been spent on this building. That would be sheer waste, if we do not complete the work.

RAO BAHADUR K. A. KRISHNA AIYANGAR: Sir, I wish to know whether at present there is any residence for the Assistant Excise Commissioner. I was under the impression that there is one already.

MR. A. J. VAN ROSS: There is no such building. There is a building in which for years Mr. Raman Pillai and his successors used to live. That has been pulled down. It belonged to a private gentleman.

RAO BAHADUR K. A. KRISHNA AIYANGAR: Am I to understand that the work of putting up a residence was started and is now in the course of construction?

MR. J. JOHN NIDIRY: How much money has already been spent?

PRESIDENT: That has already been stated. Rs. 4,000 and odd.

MR. K. PARAMESVARAN PILLAI: What is the total estimated cost of the buildings?

MR. A. J. VAN ROSS: It is Rs. 21,250, excluding the sum of Rs. 4,000 and odd already spent, *i. e.*, Assistant Commissioner's quarters Rs. 5,660; kitchen Rs. 1,780; lines for petty officers and 5 peons Rs. 6,780; lines for petty officers and 4 peons Rs. 6,960; and improvements to a well Rs. 70.

PRESIDENT: In the light of the explanation offered, does Mr. T. K. Velu Pillai withdraw his motion?

MR. T. K. VELU PILLAI: If Mr. Van Ross assures this House that this building is absolutely necessary for the convenience of the officers in charge of the collection of the customs duty in Arukutty, I do not want to distrust him.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

PRESIDENT: He has assured us that this is the purpose.

MR. T. K. VELU PILLAI: I wish to bring to the notice of the Council that the building of lines for the poor peons should go hand in hand with the construction of the officer's quarters. On that assurance, I am prepared to withdraw my motion.

MR. A. J. VAN ROSS: A sum of Rs. 2,000 has already been spent on the quarters for peons.

The motion was, by leave, withdrawn.

***Motion* 31.**

MR. A. GOVINDA MENON: Sir, I beg to make the following motion:

31. To reduce the allotment of Rs. 61,240 for Division offices under 4 B—Excise by Rs. 11,000.

The reason that prompted me to bring up this motion before the House was the excessive expenditure under establishment. When we compare the recommendations of the Salaries Committee and the staff detailed in the budget for 1098, we see that there is a great deal of difference between the two. The difference between the excise revenue in 1096 and that in the coming year is about Rs. 3 lakhs. The establishment charges have gone up by nearly the same amount, as seen from the actuals of the year 1096 and the budget figures for 1098. The number of Assistant Commissioners, about whom we can say nothing, and the number of Inspectors have been increased. Of course, I do not want to say anything about reducing any particular item in the allotment, but what I say is that we will give the officer the allotted amount *minus* the amount which I have proposed for reduction, and I ask the Government to adjust the expenditure of the department in such a way that this amount will satisfy the proper administration of the department.

PRESIDENT: Mr. Kumara Pillai, your motion, I suppose, is identical with the one that has just now been moved. If you propose to speak, you may therefore do so now.

MR. T. KUMARA PILLAI: Sir, ഈ ചെറിയ രാജ്യത്ത് എക്സൈസു വകുപ്പിനെ ഭരിക്കുന്നതിന് ഒരു കമിഷണറും, അദ്ദേഹത്തെ സഹായിക്കാനായി ഫസ്റ്റ് അസിസ്റ്റൻറ് കമിഷണറുമൊക്കെയുണ്ടെന്നറിയുമ്പോൾ ആ ഭരണനയത്തെപ്പറ്റി ആരും ആശ്ചര്യപ്പെടാതിരിക്കുമെന്നുതോന്നുന്നില്ല. എക്സൈസുവകുപ്പിലെ വരവിൻറെ തോതിനെ കണക്കാക്കി ശമ്പളച്ചിലവുകൾ വർദ്ധിപ്പിക്കണമെന്നുള്ള വാദം ഒരിക്കലും നില്ക്കത്തക്കതല്ല. ഇങ്ങനെയുള്ള ഡിപ്പാർട്ടുമെൻറുകളിലെ ചിലവു നീക്കിയുള്ള ലാഭത്തിൽ നിന്നുമാണ് വരവു കുറഞ്ഞിട്ടുള്ള കൃഷി, വ്യവസായം, മുതലായ മറ്റു ഡിപ്പാർട്ടുമെൻറുകളുടെ ഭരണം നിർവഹിക്കേണ്ടതെന്നുള്ള തത്വം മറന്നു കളയാൻ പാടുള്ളതല്ല. എക്സൈസു വകുപ്പിലെ വരവിൻറെ തോതിനെ കണക്കാക്കി ചിലവാക്കണമെന്നുള്ള വാദം തടസ്സം വഹിക്കത്തക്കതല്ലെന്നുള്ളത് പുറമെ വിവരിക്കുന്നു കണക്കുകൾ തെളിയിക്കുന്നതാണ്:

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[Mr. G, Parameswaran Pillai.]

ആണ്ട്.	എക്സൈസ് ഇനത്തിലെ വരവു രൂപാ.	ചിലവു രൂപാ.	സക്കിംസിലെ ചിലവു രൂപാ.
൧൦൯൫	൩൩,൫൪,൫൭൫	൩,൫൫,൩൦൪	൪൪,൪൭൦
൧൦൯൬	൩൪,൫൩,൦൩൫	൩,൫൫,൫൫൪	൩൪,൩൩൩
൧൦൯൭	൩൩,൪൩,൫൩൩	൩,൦൫,൭൩൦	൩൩൩,൫൫൭
൧൦൯൮	൪൭,൩൦,൦൦൦	൩,൭൩,൫൦൦	൭൪,൭൭൭
൧൦൯൯	൪൫,൩൩,൦൦൦	൪,൦൫,൦൦൦	൫൪,൦൦൦

എക്സൈസു വകുപ്പിൽ ൯൩-ൽ നിന്നും ൯൫-ൽ ഒട്ടു ലക്ഷത്തിൽ പരം രൂപാ വരവിൽ കുറഞ്ഞിരിക്കുന്നു എങ്കിലും ആകച്ചിലവിൽ ൩൭,൪൫൦ രൂപായും, സക്കിംസിലെ ചിലവിൽ പതിനായിരത്തോളം രൂപായും വർദ്ധിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു.

എക്സൈസുവകുപ്പിൽ ഫസ്റ്റ് അസിസ്റ്റൻറ് കമിഷണറന്മാർ വളരെ വളരെ കുട്ടത്തൊണ്ണൂറ് പൊതുജനങ്ങൾ ഒരുപോലെ നിലവിളിക്കുന്ന ഒരു സംഗതിയുണ്ട്. എന്നിരുന്നാലും ആ വഴിയിലും പിന്നും ശമ്പളച്ചിലവുകളെ വർദ്ധിപ്പിക്കുന്നതിൻെ. അതൌചിത്യത്തെപ്പറ്റിഎന്താണ് പറയേണ്ടതെന്നറിയുന്നില്ല. ഡിവിഷൻ ആഫീസുകളിലെ ശമ്പളച്ചിലവുകളിൽ ൧൦,൭൫൦ രൂപാ കുറയ്ക്കുന്നതിനെ കൊണ്ടുവന്നിട്ടുള്ള എൻെറ പ്രമേയത്തെ അസിസ്റ്റൻറ് കമിഷണറന്മാരുടെ എണ്ണത്തെ കഴിയുംവിധം കുറയ്ക്കണമെന്നുള്ള ഉദ്ദേശത്തോടുകൂടിയാണ്. അവരേയും അവരുടെ ശമ്പളങ്ങളേയും കുറയ്ക്കുന്നതിനെപ്പറ്റി ഈ കൌൺസിലിൽ പറയാൻ ഞങ്ങൾക്ക് അധികാരമില്ലാത്തതുകൊണ്ട് അവരുടെ സിൽബന്തികളിൽ ൧൦,൭൫൦ രൂപാ കിട്ടത്തക്കവണ്ണം കുറയ്ക്കുന്നതായാൽ സിൽബന്തികളില്ലാതെ പക്ഷേ അസിസ്റ്റൻറ് കമിഷണറന്മാരും താനെ കുറഞ്ഞുപോകുമെന്നുള്ള ഉദ്ദേശത്തോടുകൂടിയാണ് ഈ പ്രമേയംകൊണ്ടു വന്നിട്ടുള്ളത്. ഈ സംഗതികളെ കമിഷണർ വേണ്ടപോലെ ആലോചിച്ച് ഏതാനും അസിസ്റ്റൻറ് കമിഷണറന്മാരെ എങ്കിലും സ്വയമേവ തന്നെ കുറയ്ക്കുന്നത് ഉചിതമായിരിയ്ക്കുമെന്നു ഞാൻ അഭിപ്രായപ്പെടുന്നു.

MR. A. J. VAN ROSS : The member has shown that the expenditure has increased from 1095 to 1098. The reason for the increase of the expenditure in 1096, *viz.*, Rs. 3 lakhs, to Rs. 4 lakhs and odd in 1098, is due to increments given recently to the subordinates of the department. As regards the reorganisation effected by me, there would have been a saving of Rs 39,000 annually, but for the increments given to the subordinates; but the saving shown has now been swallowed up by the increments given to the peons and petty officers.

MR. G. PARAMESVARAN PILLAI : Will the Excise Commissioner be pleased to state the main heads of which the sum of Rs. 39,000 is composed?

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MR A. J. VAN ROSS: 18 Inspectors, 50 petty officers, and 125 peons have been reduced. I may tell the Council that the expenditure of the department on salaries and establishment *has not* increased *pari passu* with the revenue. In fact, while the revenue has doubled, the expenditure has remained almost stationary. In 1082, the expenditure on account of salaries was Rs. 4·4 lakhs, whereas the income was Rs. 41·63 lakhs. In 1096, the income was Rs. 87·22 lakhs, while the expenditure was only Rs. 4·3 lakhs, so that, the fact that, while the revenue has doubled, expenditure has remained stationary, is very clear.

MR. K P. RAMAN PILLAI: I presume, Sir, that the Commissioner is including salt and customs while we are talking of the excise revenue.

MR. A. J. VAN ROSS: I am speaking of the establishment which is common to both. Instead of increasing the expenditure, this department has consistently kept it down. There is only a difference of Rs. 2 lakhs.

One point that Mr. Govinda Menon referred to was with regard to the number of Assistant Commissioners. The number of Assistant Commissioners has not been increased. We have maintained the old number which was necessary for safeguarding the revenue and that only because the interests of efficiency required it. I am sorry I am unable to accept a general reduction.

MR. K. P. RAMAN PILLAI: Sir, I may be allowed to point out that it would be quite possible for the Excise Commissioner to make a reduction. The Salaries Committee itself, of which we have heard so much, has recommended the abolition of two Circles, *viz.*, the Alleppey and Nagercoil Distillery Circles. Speaking of the Alleppey Circle, the Assistant Excise Commissioner has only to supervise the work of 4 Inspectors, *viz.*, the Inspector for tobacco, the Inspector in charge of the range, the Sea-Customs Inspector, and the Port Salt Depôt Inspector. I am sure Mr. Van Ross would admit that the post of an Assistant Commissioner to supervise these 4 Inspectors would be too much. At a time when a separate Assistant Commissioner was posted at Alleppey, he combined in himself the duties of the Port Officer, the Treasury Officer and certain other officers. Now I submit the necessity for this has ceased to exist. Similarly also, when the late Excise Commissioner recommended the formation of the distilleries into a separate circle, he had certain reasons which do not exist now. Its name originally was the *Distillery and Warehouse Circle*. There were 32 warehouses and the distilleries at Nagercoil and Shencottah were placed under him. The Shencottah distillery had to be opened because the demand for arrack was so great. The P. W. D. was so slack in the putting up of pot stills at Nagercoil that the old distillery had to be worked up. At present the Shencottah distillery has been closed and the 32 warehouses have been distributed and placed under the charge of the respective Assistant Commissioners, so that the Circle Officer or the Assistant Commissioner now becomes Distillery Assistant

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[Mr. A. Govinda Menon.]

Commissioner and will be in charge of only one distillery. I am sure Mr. Van Ross will find his way to accept the recommendations of the Salaries Committee in regard to the abolition of these two Circles or Divisions.

Further, I am sure that he would find it easy to reduce at least two more of these Divisions. Firstly, the Piravam Division. At a time when a Circle Officer was posted at Piravam let us take that there was considerable difference between the prices of tobacco obtaining in Travancore and Cochin ; but recently, a year or so ago, the price of tobacco has been raised and smuggling has practically ceased from Cochin to this side, so much so, that the Piravom Circle Assistant Commissioner has to supervise in Cochin only 4 Inspectors in 2 ranges, Muvattupuzha and Todupuzha,—3 Inspectors in Muvattupuzha and 1 in Todupuzha. The statistics for 1097 show that, in these 2 taluks, there are only 33 arrack and 10 toddy shops bringing in a rental of Rs. 14,485. The tree tax roughly amounts to Rs 9,000. There are, besides, 7 opium and *ganja* shops. So that, it is for the purpose of supervising these few shops that one Assistant Commissioner is now sought to be posted there. Speaking of smuggling, Sir, I wish to point out that last year there were only 9 cases of smuggling reported, of which 6 alone were charged. Of the 151 cases reported, 133 were for illicit manufacture of toddy, of which 122 alone ended in conviction. It will be seen from the statistics for the years 1091 to 1095 that the number of cases under the Tobacco Regulation was 382, 281, 257, 209 and 171 respectively, while last year we had only 9 cases. That is on account of the fact that the price of tobacco in Cochin has been raised. At one time huge smuggling was going on in the frontier. It was necessary at that time to have a separate Circle Officer for supervision. In the light of these statistics, I hope Mr. Van Ross will find his way to amalgamate the two Circles.

The other Division I suggest for abolition is the Devicolam Division, where there are only 7 toddy shops with a rental of Rs 3,600. I am sure Mr. Van Ross will find his way to reduce these four high-sounding Assistant Excise Commissioners and their staff.

MR. A. HOOGEWERF: Sir, it is dangerous to make these proposals for reduction in a haphazard way—a cut here, a cut there and a cut everywhere. I think there must be a systematised and organised business in this affair. The whole plan should be thoroughly considered before any cut is to be effected, if it is to be effected at all. I wish to speak at some greater length, in connection with the motion that I have to make before this House. I will try to show the fundamental defect of the department, and also whether any cut is necessary, and, if so, what sort of cut it is. The whole question has to be gone into in some detail before any conclusion can be come to.

MR. A. GOVINDA MENON: Sir, I think I cannot but press the motion for a division, because even the figures as regards the gradual

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

rise of expenditure under establishment in this department, taken from the Administration Report, clearly show that there is necessity for using the pruning knife a little more.

PRESIDENT: Please speak louder. Mr. Van Ross must hear, for he has to make his reply.

MR. A. GOVINDA MENON: In 1090, there was an income of Rs. 84·82 lakhs. Of course, in those days, the revenue under Excise, Customs and Marine was included under one head. It is rather difficult to separate these items and there is not much use in doing so. In 1098, the total income under these heads is estimated to be Rs. 81.86 lakhs. While the expenditure under establishment in 1090 was Rs. 4 lakhs, that in 1098 comes to Rs. 6·68 lakhs nearly. There is thus a difference of nearly Rs. 2 lakhs and that is an *increase* in expenditure, while there is a deficit of nearly Rs. 3 lakhs in income. There is something certainly wrong in those who are administering the department, especially in times like this, when we should reduce as many officers as possible I do not think that I can come to any sort of compromise in this matter, because it involves the rise of nearly Rs. 2 lakhs under establishment.

I take the figures including the whole of 'Excise' as given in former years; but the figures given in the previous Administration Reports, under 'Excise' include 'Marine' also. I have included all these together in the item of expenditure. There will not be much difference, because under 'Marine,' we get only a very small sum. There is no way of separating these figures. Whereas the revenue in 1090 came to Rs. 84·82 lakhs, that according to the budget for 1098 comes only to Rs. 81 lakhs and odd. Thus we see that, while there is a deficit of nearly Rs. 3 lakhs in income, there is an increase of about Rs. 2 lakhs under establishment charges.

The Council rose for lunch at 2 P. M. and met again at 2-50 P. M.

MR. A. J. VAN ROSS: Sir, as far as I could have heard Mr. Govinda Menon, I think that his argument is that, while the revenue under 'Excise' has fallen, the expenditure has considerably risen. I may point out that the revenue from excise has not fallen and that it has, on the other hand, increased. In 1082 the revenue was Rs. 41·63 lakhs; in 1096 it was Rs. 81·67 lakhs. In 1082, the expenditure including salaries was 5·54 per cent; in 1096, the total expenditure of the department was 8·54 per cent. That is due to the inclusion of Rs 2·81 lakhs on account of refund of part duty on tea. If that is taken away, the percentage will come to 5·84. It must be noted that the duty on tea is not an expenditure but a return of expenditure. From a comparison of these figures it will be seen that we have practically not raised our expenditure, in spite of the large increase in the cost of maintenance of works, cost of materials, cost of transport, and cost of travelling. I should think that the achievement of the department is very good. The reasoning based upon that argument, therefore, falls to the ground.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

[Mr. A. J. Van Ross.]

Then Mr. K. P. Raman Pillai said that we might abolish two or three of our Circles. He spoke of the Piravam Circle, the Alleppey Circle, and the Devicolam and Distillery Circles.

MR. A. HOOGEWERF: Sir, I cannot hear.

MR. A. J. VAN ROSS: But I must say that Mr. Raman Pillai looked only at the abkari revenue. He said that there were only a few shops and that the prevention of tobacco smuggling was not necessary as there was no such smuggling. I submit that there is still smuggling. Only a month before the last we seized 2 *candies* of tobacco and we have them in our charge. There are many other instances of smuggling brought to my notice. So long as the difference between the duty on Cochin tobacco and Travancore tobacco exists, smuggling will go on. About Rs. 16 lakhs of our revenue depend upon the Piravam Circle, so that I cannot see how I can abolish that Circle.

Now, in regard to the Devicolam Circle, I must point out, in the first instance, that it is not possible for another Circle Officer to look into that area also. Certainly, the reasons given are not adequate. Members spoke only of the abkari revenue and said that the arrack revenue is derived from contractors. But they have not taken into account the number of customs houses. Again there is the salt revenue, and there is also the tobacco revenue. This latter comes to Rs. 18,650; the abkari revenue comes to Rs. 13,095; and the customs revenue to Rs. 37,000. There are eight customs houses, all on the frontier. And we want an officer to deal with these customs matters and other different transactions of the department. Then there is another matter. We are in a way under obligation to the British Government to maintain a strong force on the frontier. For these reasons we cannot think of abolishing the Devicolam Division.

Then Mr. Raman Pillai spoke about the Alleppey Circle. This Circle was reorganised in 1090 when the functions of the Assistant Excise Commissioner in charge of that Circle connected with the Port of Alleppey were taken away from him and vested in a separate Port Officer. At that time, the Circle comprised only the whole of the Alleppey *pakuthi* of the Ambalapuzha taluk, the Ariad *pakuthi* and a portion of the Mararikulam *pakuthi* of the Shertallai taluk. Mr. N. Raman Pillai was the Excise Commissioner then. Had that veteran officer considered that the presence of a controlling excise officer in the town of Alleppey was unnecessary, it would have been a most favourable moment for him to do away with the Circle. Instead of doing so, he tacked on the Ambalapuzha range to the Circle in order to perpetuate the Circle and increased its area to 125 square miles. I quote the following from his letter to Government on the subject, No. 122 Ct., dated the 27th Mithunam 1090:

"The Alleppey Circle cannot possibly be tacked on to any other Circle, as the port salt depôt at Alleppey which is the largest salt depôt in the State, the sea customs house and the tobacco bankshall, call for the vigilant supervision and control of an officer who has

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

his headquarters at Alleppey. The above institutions and the Alleppey Excise Range together yield an annual revenue of about 14 lakhs of rupees."

Since then, the revenue of the Circle has considerably increased. In 1096, the revenue stood as follows:

Customs	Rs.	5,12,966
Salt	„	10,37,604
Tobacco	„	3,84,342
Abkari (including opium and *ganja*)	„	1,44,697
Total	„	20,79,609

Thus the need which existed in 1090 for the continuance of the Alleppey Circle has certainly increased and not decreased in 1097. This large revenue, derived principally from the three important institutions of Alleppey, has to be looked after with constant attention and care if malpractices and consequent serious loss to Government should not occur. The constant presence of an officer at the spot is essential for this purpose. It is submitted that it is not too much to ask that an officer drawing Rs. 175 to Rs. 225 should be appointed to look after this large revenue. The Assistant Excise Commissioner or the officer in charge of the Circle has several duties to perform in connection with the landing and sale of salt. (*Vide* Rules 96,97, 100, 108, 124, 125, and 126 of the Salt Rules.) He has to see that a shed is closed when it is two-thirds full. As soon as the shed is closed, the key should be in the hands of the Assistant Commissioner. In 1096, twenty-one sheds containing salt were handled and the Assistant Excise Commissioner could never perform these functions satisfactorily, unless he was at headquarters for a considerable portion of the time during the year. He could not do so if he had a large area to look after Further, Alleppey is the chief centre of trade in Travancore. Wealthy and respectable merchants have very often urgent matters connected with salt, customs and tobacco to settle with the local excise officers, and these matters will not brook delay. Even as it is, they very often send bitter complaints to me when the Assistant Excise Commissioner is absent from Alleppey for a day or two on circuit to Ambalapuzha, which is the only circuit he has to do. It will cause serious inconvenience and give rise to serious complaints if the Circle Officer happens to be absent for several days together, which he certainly will have to be, if he has to be in charge of the Kayankulam or Arukutty Circle also as proposed by the Salaries Committee. The abolition of the Circle will secure a gain of Rs. 5,208 annually as follows:

Circle officer	Rs.	200 (average)
Clerical staff	„	155
Peons and Mochi	„	54
Contingencies	„	25
Total per mensem	„	434
Total per annum	„	Rs. 5,208

The amount to be gained is inconsiderable in view of the large revenue to be safeguarded and the important duties that have to be

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

[Mr. G. Parameswaran Pillai.]

attended to by the Assistant Excise Commissioner. I have carefully considered the matter; and I am afraid I cannot agree to the proposal to abolish this Circle.

As regards the Distillery Circle, I have sufficient reasons to adduce as to why that Circle cannot be abolished. But since I have no time to go on with that subject, I would merely say that I would try my best to get on without that Circle. Beyond that, I am afraid I cannot say anything more.

PRESIDENT: Mr. Govinda Menon, Mr. Van Ross says that he will try and get on without the Distillery Circle.

MR. A. GOVINDA MENON: I beg to withdraw my motion on the assurance that the Excise Commissioner will try to abolish that Circle.

The motion was, by leave, withdrawn.

***Motion* 32.**

The following motion, being identical with the previous one already disposed of, was withdrawn:

MR. T. KUMARA PILLAI:

32. *To reduce the allotment of Rs. 61,240 for Division offices by Rs. 10,800.*

***Motion* 33.**

PRESIDENT: Mr. Parameswaran Pillai, you have given notice of an amendment to your motion 33. You may move the amended motion.

MR. G. PARAMESVARAN PILLAI: Sir, I beg to make the following motion as amended:

33. To reduce the allotment of Rs. 1,68,002 for establishment by Rs. 25,020 (abolition of Excise Sub-Inspectors).

I see no justification for the appointment of a new set of officers—the Sub-Inspectors. This motion relates to the abolition of this new office. The Salaries Committee was appointed to improve the lot of the subordinate staff. It was distinctly understood that, before recommending an increase in salaries, heads of departments should report on all possible retrenchments as well. The Excise Commissioner told us that he had made a very earnest attempt at retrenchment and I was very glad to note that Mr. Van Ross agreed to reduce his Inspectorate from 73 to 55 and to dispense with 56 petty officers and about 168 peons. Under the Inspectors alone there was to be a saving of Rs. 12,960. Though under petty officers a saving of Rs. 12,000 was anticipated, we find from the budget for 1098 that the saving actually effected is not after all very considerable, as there is a provision of Rs. 10,800 under supernumeraries. This is intended for those who have been reduced but who have not been disbanded.

PRESIDENT: Very probably the whole of the amount will not be utilised.

MR. G. PARAMESVARAN PILLAI: But the effect of the retrenchment has been completely eclipsed by the provision of a new

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

set of officers who absorb Rs. 25,020 under Excise Ranges alone. There has thus been really no saving at all, but only an additional expenditure on account of the reorganisation. Even if the original strength of Inspectors and petty officers had been retained on the revised scales of pay, the expenditure would be Rs. 12,960 less than the amount that has now been provided.

Now, let us examine the grounds on which the new scheme is sought to be supported. Two main reasons were given by the Excise Commissioner during the general discussion on the budget, and the G. O. on the subject also deals with them. Two serious defects are said to exist in the present system. "Besides office work, the Inspector is responsible for the collection of a large amount of revenue, has to carry out the operations relating to the marking of trees, has to patrol his range to detect cases of illicit tapping, etc." There is the usual plea that the Inspector is an officer burdened with multifarious duties. It is most unfortunate that a similar plea affords protection to officers who ordinarily shirk the duties that legitimately appertain to their office. The duties mentioned above are those that are lawfully cast upon the Inspectors, and if Inspectors do not attend to these duties, what else are they expected to do? The Commissioner says that the appointment of Sub-Inspectors will lighten the work of Inspectors. Of course, it will. But what are the special reasons that have influenced the Commissioner to lighten the work of the Inspectors? Their duties have not been shown to be very heavy at all.

It was pointed out by the Commissioner the other day that the collection of abkari revenue cast a heavy responsibility upon the Inspectors. Now the volume of revenue collected should not by itself terrify this House. Let us see how it is collected. From the Administration Report for 1096 it is seen that the Range Inspectors are responsible for the collection of Rs. 27·79 lakhs by way of abkari revenue. Of this, Rs. 2·79 lakhs alone is collected from one single contractor, Mr. Nadar, being the rent of the vend areas of Shertallai, Vaikam, Alangad, Parur and Kunnatnad. Rs. 36,000 is also due from the same contractor as rent in the Devicolam Circle. Rs. 14,265 is obtained under foreign liquor licenses granted at the beginning of the year and realised then and there as a lump sum. Rs. 5·91 lakhs under excise duty on arrack is collected by the 32 first grade petty officers in charge of the 32 warehouses in the State. The Inspectors then have to collect only Rs. 17·41 lakhs made up of Rs. 5·22 lakhs as rent of independent arrack shops, Rs. 9·70 lakhs as rent of independent toddy shops, and Rs. 2·46 lakhs as tree-tax. There were in 1096, 656 arrack shops and 1,430 toddy shops. In other words, there were about 2,000 shops and 73 Inspectors. It works out on an average to 27 shops for one Inspector. It has also to be remembered that more than one shop is taken up by the same contractor. Again, the method of collecting abkari revenue differs materially from the method adopted by the land revenue staff. The Inspector cannot receive any cash in hand. He has only to issue *chalans* and the shop-keepers have to remit the money into the treasury and produce the receipt as a token of their having paid the *kist*. In

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

[Mr. T. K. Velu Pillai.]

default, steps may be taken under the Revenue Recovery Regulation. Pressure may be brought to bear upon the shop-keepers by the petty officers of the Range and by the Inspectors when out on their inspection duty.

As for the prevention and detection of crime and the marking of trees, I think that, if these Sub-Inspectors are appointed, there will be overlapping of functions and a consequent loss of efficiency and lack of responsibility in regard to the proper discharge of functions by both sets of officers.

In this connection, I might touch upon the second ground urged by the Excise Commissioner in support of his scheme. It is said that the petty officers cannot be invested with the power to search houses and that a set of officers of better status are required for that purpose. The Abkari Regulation lays down that abkari officers receiving a salary of Rs. 20 or above are competent to search houses on emergent occasions and on other occasions every person has to obtain a warrant from the nearest Magistrate (*vide* Section 28). As a rule, no search should be permitted without obtaining a warrant from the Magistrate; and if a warrant is obtained, the difficulty pointed out by the Commissioner cannot arise. At present there are 90 petty officers of this status and under the revised scheme there will be 150 petty officers getting a pay between Rs. 20 and Rs. 28. The last grade Sub-Inspector gets only Rs. 35. Thus the difference in status is not after all very appreciable. I cannot understand what exactly is meant by difference in *status* under these circumstances.

Again, the duties intended to be assigned to the Sub-Inspectors are not such as would warrant any additional expenditure. They are the same as those now performed by the Inspectors. The Sub-Inspectors too will have nothing to do with the charging of cases before the Magistrate. They will have merely to investigate cases. The petty officers, along with the Inspectors, collect the evidence and the Inspector charges the case. We stand to derive no particular advantage by incurring this additional expenditure on account of Sub-Inspectors. It would, therefore, be a very good saving effected, if we discountenanced this piece of reform.

MR T. K. VELU PILLAI: Sir, I have very great pleasure in supporting this motion. The learned mover has dealt with the question with such a mastery of details and thoroughness of grasp that I have very little to add to what he has said. But the subject is a very important one; and, as I have some personal experience of the Excise Department, I think it is my duty to speak a few words in support of the motion. The Excise Commissioner has given a good many reasons in support of the scheme of Sub-Inspectors. I am sorry that I am not able to agree with him. One of the reasons, the Commissioner said, is to remove the defects in the Abkari Regulation regarding house-searches. A house-search, Sir, is a very serious matter; it is a very serious infringement on the private rights of the citizen; and it is certainly a benevolent and wise provision of the law that searches should

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

be conducted only with the previous sanction of a Magistrate who has to be satisfied in every case that a search is necessary. If a search-warrant is obtained from a Magistrate, a petty officer or a peon can conduct the search with equal success as a Sub-Inspector. No doubt, the Regulation allows certain powers to the abkari officers in the matter of conducting searches without a warrant. The Excise Inspector is an officer of some status. There is neither rhyme nor reason in dividing the range into two parts and placing one of them in charge of a Sub-Inspector and entrusting the other to the Inspector himself. The two officers will be pulling in opposite directions. An Inspector on Rs. 60 will seldom be able to have any healthy influence on a Sub-Inspector, who draws Rs. 40, particularly when conflicts of interests arise between them. I wish to add that a Sub-Inspector would be able to exert very little influence over a petty officer who draws Rs. 28.

I learn that these Sub-Inspectors are not to be given any travelling allowance. The Sub-Inspector, once he is dubbed such, will feel that he is an important personage in the taluk. In the country parts he will be looked upon as a great man and he will look upon himself as the world looks upon him. He will try to emulate the life and methods adopted by the Police Inspector, the Sub-Registrar, the Deputy Tahsildar and the other officers of the locality. As he has to do travelling work also, he will not be able to make both ends meet. I have heard of a Police Inspector having had a coach and two horses when he was drawing only Rs. 25. I think, if the system comes into existence, the Excise Sub-Inspector will have to look to other sources for necessary funds as the old Police Inspector did. That would certainly not be advantageous to the service.

If the object is to make searches without magisterial warrants, I take it, Sir, that it is just the reason why this scheme should altogether be abandoned, because the object will be to get through a side-wind what you cannot get directly. That is a most obnoxious principle; and I protest against such an idea. There seems to be, however, an opinion that the Excise Inspectors are slack in their duty. This, is a statement which applies equally to the other departments of Government also. It is my belief that our officers are not doing as much work as they are expected to do. The fault does not lie in the Assistant Commissioner or the Commissioner, but in the system When a man gets a place in which he can live and command all kinds of luxuries, he becomes reluctant to exert himself in his work to any appreciable extent. There is an apparent justification for this attitude on the part of the Inspector, because he is charged with the duty of collecting the rents due from the shops within his jurisdiction. I think this is a wrong practice which does not obtain in any other country. I support Mr. Paramesvaran Pillai's motion with all the earnestness I can command.

MR. A. HOGGEWERF: Sir, in speaking of the appointment of Sub-Inspectors in the present reorganisation scheme of the Excise Department, it is necessary not only to refer to the number of Inspectors, petty officers and peons who have to be retired, and the Sub-Inspectors

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

[Mr. A. Hoogewerf.]

and Assistant Commissioners to be created, but also to the general administration of the department and the principles regulating and guiding excise administration. I said in my speech during the general discussion on the budget that, in consideration of the responsibility of this department which brings in about one-half of the State revenue, the officers from the Commissioner downwards should be adequately paid. I should not have had a word to say against the extra cost of Rs. 66,348 per annum asked for to effect the reorganisation, if the proposed new appointments and reduction of staff would result in greater efficiency and in the better working of the department.

A great deal may be said against the new arrangement of appointing Sub-Inspectors to help Inspectors in charge of ranges. The ranges have been reduced from 49 to 32, and in place of the 17 Range Inspectors dispensed with, 54 Sub-Inspectors have been substituted for field work. In other words, deducting the 17 Inspectors to be retired, there will be 37 extra Sub-Inspectors put in for range work. This gives, on an average, a fraction more than one Sub-Inspector to every range, besides another Sub-Inspector who takes the place of the Inspector dispensed with. Taking the Trivandrum and the Neyyattinkara taluks, for example, where there are at present, two and three ranges, respectively, each with a separate Inspector and petty officer in charge of party areas, the two ranges of the Trivandrum taluk will be combined into one single range, called the Trivandrum range, and put in charge of one Inspector and two Sub-Inspectors to help him. Similarly, in all probability, the three ranges in the Neyyattinkara taluk, with three separate Inspectors and petty officers under them, each responsible for the revenue of his range, will be combined into one range with a single Inspector and three Sub-Inspectors under him. A word to the wise is enough; and I am sure the members of this Council will see at a glance that the last state is worse than the first. Responsibility cannot be reduced, which must seriously affect the revenue. The so-called Inspector, being after all a Range Inspector, cannot exercise that authority and control over the Sub-Inspector, who is not far below him in pay and rank. Functions must necessarily overlap; and there will be very often serious friction and 'pull devil, pull baker' tugs between the two officers, especially as the latter are, I believe, to be recruited from among our young graduates. I need not labour this point. The number of petty officers will be reduced from 306 to 256 and the number of peons from 1,357 to 1,241. Out of the 256 petty officers, probably at least about 255 will be deputed for field work. These petty officers had separate areas both in ranges and in the frontiers and clear-cut functions to do. They, along with the peons, may be said to be the very backbone of the department. The scheme evidently takes them away from their responsible duties, and makes them a sort of tail or appendage to the Inspector in the collection of shop and other rentals and to the Sub-Inspector in the detection of cases. The Sub-Inspector will have a sort of roving commission. The Sub-Inspector has been specially created to leave time to the Inspector

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

to become a full-blown tax-collector, and also to conduct house-searches. The Range Inspector must be a preventive and detecting officer, pure and simple, and should have nothing to do with the collection of rentals. This very often forces him to wink at the shop-renters' malpractices. House-searches are not so very easily conducted by any officer of the department, from the Commissioner downwards, as the scheme would make us believe. The Legislature provides restrictions and safeguards in the way of obtaining search-warrants for conducting house-searches, except in very emergent cases, which the departmental officers cannot ignore. While the cases detected by a Sub-Inspector will be investigated by the Range Inspector, the serious flaw still remains of the Range Inspector being the investigator of his own cases. The Regulation contemplates such investigation being conducted by an officer of high status —the Circle Inspector or Circle Officer—and not by a Range Inspector who, in his anxiety, must necessarily side with his *sub*, with the object of keeping up revenue in his range. The 37 extra Sub-Inspectors can never do the work of the 250 and odd petty officers with nearly the same number of party areas; and if some of the petty officers are still to be in charge of parties, they also should be given powers for conducting house-searches, if the Commissioner's argument is sound.

The whole scheme, I regret to say, is evolved not only on an incorrect understanding of the spirit and letter of the Regulation, but for the one and only purpose for which the department is supposed to exist —the collection of revenue, which has become an obsession and a fetish. The people's rights and prosperity do not find a place anywhere. It should never be forgotten that abkari laws are not fiscal, but prohibitive or temperance laws to put down drink, and that it is on the birthright of the people—the yield of the cocoanut and other palms—that taxes and duties are imposed, on the plea of minimising drink. These laws have therefore to be worked with the greatest caution and the least hardship to the people.

RAO BAHADUR K. A. KRISHNA AIYANGAR: Sir, I am sorry that on this motion I cannot see eye to eye with my friend, Mr. G. Paramesvaran Pillai. The total strength of the employees in Excise Ranges, beginning with the Inspector and ending with the peons, was 1,089 for the year 1097. For the coming year it is put down as 1,045 including the petty officers and the peons held in reserve. The increase of expenditure for the coming year over the figures of the current year is Rs. 34,000. According to the revised budget for the current year, the amount is Rs. 1,34,000. The budget for the coming year is Rs. 1,68,000, with an increase of Rs. 34,000. It will be apparent that there has been a reduction in the strength of the establishment, while there has been an increase in the salary of the establishment. There was a revision of salaries, which was urgently called for by the general public in consequence of an abnormal rise in the cost of living; and Government felt that it was desirable to give a living wage to their public servants—especially to those working in the lower rungs of the ladder. If my friends contend that the scale of salary recommended by the Committee is beyond their deserts, I could understand it.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

[Mr. A. J. Van Ross.]

MR. K. P. RAMAN PILLAI: In the higher rungs it is.

MR. T. K. VELU PILLAI: I wish to tell Mr. Krishna Aiyangar that the scale of salaries recommended is not at all adequate.

RAO BAHADUR K. A. KRISHNA AIYANGAR: Then all right. If it is a redistribution I should not quarrel with them.

With reference to the total strength of 1,045 officers, there is an increased provision of Rs. 34,000 to meet the requirements of the situation. Many of these—I believe, all those below the rank of Range Inspectors—must have been in receipt of scarcity allowance for that period. It is not apparent how much that amount would come to. The increase, therefore, appears to me to be a perfectly legitimate increase, given to a very large class of the hard-working servants employed in the Excise Department. And it appears to me that it is rather ungenerous to secure a cut. The whole of that is purely votable. These Range Inspectors are entirely under the control of this House. I appeal, therefore, to my friends to consider whether, so far as that part of the budget goes, a serious reduction is necessary. If a reduction is made, it will seriously react on a class of people who deserve our sympathy. I, therefore, vote against the motion.

MR. A. J. VAN ROSS: Sir, I would just explain the system that is now obtaining in the Excise Department. The old system has been in existence for the past twelve years, and was found to work fairly well, beginning with a steady increase in the excise revenue. For the purpose of excise administration, the State is divided into a number of Circles and each Circle is divided into ranges, and it has further been split up into parties, each party being under a petty officer, who is assisted by peons. Now, I have not altered this scheme. I have merely replaced that petty officer by a Sub-Inspector. I am sure the House will agree with me that the Sub-Inspector is much better than the petty officer. He is an officer of higher status and must do better work than the petty officer. Now, one charge levelled against the scheme is that the expenditure has increased. The scheme, including the Sub-Inspectors put forward by me, brought in a saving of Rs. 39,000. Yet my friend said that the scheme (Sub-Inspectors included) involves additional expenditure.

MR. K. P. RAMAN PILLAI: May I point out to the Commissioner that the Financial Secretary says that there is an increase of expenditure amounting to Rs. 66,348 on account of the reorganisation?

MR. A. J. VAN ROSS: Sir, that is due to the increase of salaries and not on account of the scheme. You must thank me for helping the Government to the extent of Rs. 39,000.

Now, coming to the question of the work of the Inspector, I do not say that the Sub-Inspector is to *replace* the Inspector and that the Inspector will have nothing to do. The Inspector has too much work to do, and it is my duty to give him relief.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

As to Section 28 of the Abkari Regulation, one member said that an officer drawing Rs. 20 and above has power to search any place and seize any article without warrant; but the department has to specifically appoint these men, under Section 4 of the Regulation, as abkari officers. Mr. G. Parameswaran Pillai says that the petty officer may be invested with power to search houses under the Regulation. But that petty officer will still be a petty officer in the eye of the public, though he may be given a higher pay; and the Magistrate too will not have much confidence in him. So we had to change the name to make him a man of status. The Sub-Inspector gets Rs. 35 to Rs. 45. He has to look up to Rs. 45. These Inspectors have at present to take the Magistrate's warrant wherever it is possible to do so; but in very many cases, owing to the injury of delay, many searches have to be done on the spur of the moment and it is not possible to obtain the Magistrate's warrant. It is to provide for such searches that I want these Sub-Inspectors.

Then I come to another argument. I think it was Mr. Hoogewerf who said that a large number of petty officers will have to be sent away. I am glad to say that no one will have to be sent away. I have been able to adjust all that.

MR. A. HOOGEWERF: I beg to know if that is in the budget. I saw 17 Inspectors for retirement. I do not think there is any mention of their being placed on the supernumerary list.

MR. A. J. VAN ROSS: The budget was prepared immediately after the reorganisation scheme was sanctioned. I have since been working it out. I think I shall not have to send away any man. Some will be provided for in other departments. A few acting Inspectors will have to go as Sub-Inspectors; but no man need be sent away.

MR. G. PARAMESVARAN PILLAI: There is a sum of Rs. 10,782 provided for supernumeraries in the budget.

PRESIDENT: The budget was framed before the reorganisation was given effect to.

MR. A. J. VAN ROSS: As regards the travelling allowance to Sub-Inspectors, I may point out that they are expected to work within a radius of 10 or 12 miles. The Inspector has to go about a whole taluk. The Inspector's pay is Rs. 60 to Rs. 90 and Rs. 100 to Rs. 125, whereas the Sub-Inspector is to be paid only Rs. 35 to Rs. 45. There is sufficient difference between the two to ensure the obedience of the Sub-Inspector to the Inspector. The Inspector is responsible for the collection of a large amount of revenue which absorbs almost all his time. He has, besides, to carry out himself the operations relating to the marking of trees licensed for tapping in his range. This is a duty which he invariably fails to carry out owing to other pressure on his time. As the failure to carry out tree-marking work efficiently and promptly means loss of revenue to Government under tree-tax, this is a serious evil. He has again to patrol his range to detect cases of illicit tapping, illicit possession and sale of toddy and arrack, illicit distillation, and malpractice relating to opium and *ganja*, salt and tobacco.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

[Mr. N. Padmanabha Pillai.]

MR. K. P. RAMAN PILLAI: Sir, the Commissioner was stating that all the cases are detected by the Inspectors. It is not so. Inspectors detected 596 cases while petty officers and peons detected 646 cases.

MR. A. J. VAN ROSS: These are only simple cases.

For these reasons I am unable to accept the motion.

MR. M. R. MADHAVA VARIAR: Sir, I am not convinced of the necessity for appointing certain officers called Sub-Inspectors who are intermediaries between the Inspectors and the petty officers. It is said in the Government Order that these appointments are made simply to relieve the Inspectors of their multifarious duties. Now we find that they are very onerous. These duties were performed by the Inspectors then, and they are being performed by them now also.

Hitherto the Excise Department has not complained either about the lack of enthusiasm on the part of the Inspectors or about the kind of the work they have to do. For example, take the tree-marking operation by the Inspectors. They have to be marked twice or thrice every year. This work may very well be delegated to the petty officer. I know this work was done in 1091, 1092 and 1093 in the Kottayam Division by petty officers quite satisfactorily. The Inspector has only to supervise the work. If the tree-marking is done by the petty officer, the Inspector can supervise that work. It is not a very difficult work.

With regard to the revenue, as was observed by my friend Mr. G. Parameswaran Pillai, there is not much to be collected. So, on the score of work, it is not necessary to appoint Sub-Inspectors to give relief to the Inspectors. Now the Sub-Inspectors' appointments are new. If they are to be men of status, and much better status than petty officers, then new appointments must be made. Now there are about 34 petty officers who are on the list of supernumeraries. They cannot be appointed because they are not of the same status as that of the proposed Sub-Inspectors. Mr. Van Ross tells us that the Sub-Inspectors must be of a higher status than the petty officers. If they are given some more pay, they will not thereby become men of better status. If new appointments have to be made, it is a loss to the exchequer. So I agree with Mr. Parameswaran Pillai, and I too plead that these Sub-Inspectors need not be appointed.

MR. N. PADMANABHA PILLAI: Sir, I do not think it possible to grant that the Excise Range Inspectors are over-worked officers. In regard to tree-marking, it has to be done half-yearly, and, under the Excise Rules, this business has to be done within 21 days during the first month of each half-year. The work will be over in the first month itself. So, it cannot be said that these excise officers are over-worked on that account. With regard to another point that is raised by the Excise Commissioner, *viz.*, the work of prosecution in courts by these officers, we see that the number of cases charged during the year 1096 was only 1096 and that is the work done by about the seventy-

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

existing Excise Inspectors. That will work out to something like 16 cases *per* Inspector. That itself is not a sufficient datum to proceed upon, because we have no information as to the number of contested cases that these Inspectors had to conduct during the year. From what I understand from some of the Range Inspectors, the cases in which these Inspectors will have to appear every year will be two per head. On these grounds, I think one of the grounds urged by the Excise Commissioner to show that the existing Inspectors are being overworked cannot stand.

MR. V. SUBBA AIYAR: Sir, I beg to bring to the notice of the House a matter relating to Section 28 of the Abkari Regulation to which Mr. G. Parameswaran Pillai referred. The Regulation referred to is Regulation IV of 1073, and that Section distinctly says that an officer getting over Rs. 20 has got the power to enter and search a house and even to arrest the offender if he suspects that illicit distillation is going on in any place and that the delay in getting a warrant from the Magistrate may defeat the object in view. I believe that every member of the House knows that at that time no petty officer was drawing over Rs. 20. So, the intention of the Legislature was that a petty officer should not have the power to search any place where illicit distillation is going on or to arrest an offender. That the spirit of the Regulation has been kept up is evident, for the Excise Commissioner has told us that the petty officer has not been declared to be an abkari officer for the purposes of the Section referred to above.

MR. P. K. NARAYANA PILLAI: That is not correct. I may draw the attention of my friend, the learned Law Member, to the rules passed in March, 1909, in which a peon has been declared an abkari officer.

MR. V. SUBBA AIYAR: When Section 28 allows a particular officer drawing above Rs. 20 to enter a house and make a search, a peon cannot by a notification be invested with that power. A person who is declared an abkari officer for a particular purpose cannot exercise powers under Section 28. Mr. Van Ross has told us, and I believe he must be right, that a petty officer is not allowed to exercise the power. Anyhow, that is how the matter stands.

Turning to the revenue aspect of the matter, we find now that 79 men among Inspectors and petty officers together have been reduced, and that a saving has thus been effected. If we take the average of the scale of pay now given, we shall find that the average pay of the 18 Inspectors that have been reduced may be taken to be equal to the average pay of 36 Sub-Inspectors. The average pay of an Inspector may be taken at Rs. 80.

MR. G. PARAMESVARAN PILLAI: The Inspector gets from Rs. 60 to Rs. 80 and from Rs. 100 to Rs. 125.

MR. V. SUBBA AIYAR: I believe I have got the authority of my friend the Financial Secretary in this calculation.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

[Mr. A. Hoogewerf.]

MR. G. PARAMESVARAN PILLAI: The Sub-Inspector has no scale.

MR. V. SUBBA AIYAR: They are of three grades, *viz.*, Rs. 35, Rs. 40 and Rs. 45. I shall take the average pay of a Sub-Inspector as Rs. 40. This means that every Inspector will count as two Sub-Inspectors. Again, 50 petty officers have been reduced; and that might fairly give us 25 Sub-Inspectors. If we take the strength of the force, we shall find that, instead of certain Inspectors of higher pay and a few petty officers of lower pay, this class of Sub-Inspectors has been put in. I do not think that there is anything in the difference in the name. I suppose that my friends on the other side, especially the lawyer members, know that, in other parts of India, for instance in Bengal, every Munsiff is called a second grade Subordinate Judge and the Subordinate Judge of Tinnevelly is a first grade Subordinate Judge of Bengal. Although the powers exercised by the two grades of Subordinate Judges are very different, yet both are called Subordinate Judges. If, instead of calling a person a petty officer on Rs. 30-40-45, he is called a Sub-Inspector, I do not see why the House should take objection to that name. Mr. Van Ross has assured us that there is absolutely no difference in the powers contemplated. In the place of a petty officer, he wants a Sub-Inspector to be in charge of a particular party. That being the case, I do not see why we should grudge a change in the name. Suppose we call the Sub-Inspectors senior petty officers; will the House be satisfied? I do not think there is any objection to let these poor officers have the satisfaction of being designated a bit higher than they deserve. I may also say that the proposed change does not contemplate any extra expenditure. The creation of the Sub-Inspectors would not cost a pie more than what it would otherwise cost by the reorganisation. In other words, if we revert to the old system of 73 Inspectors and 306 petty officers on the scales of pay now proposed, I believe that every member of the House will be satisfied that the scheme will cost much more than what it does under the present reorganisation scheme. That being the case, it should be to the credit of the Excise Commissioner that he has given up an allotment of Rs. 39,000 on this account. I ask everyone of you to work out the figures and see what these 306 petty officers and 73 Inspectors would cost under the new scale. It will be found that these Sub-Inspectors do not cost anything extra at all. We are merely fighting the shadow and not the substance. I therefore appeal to the House to take a reasonable view of the matter and see that the scheme is allowed to remain intact.

MR. A. HOOGEWERF: I beg to know whether a departmental notification can overrule a Section of a Regulation according to which house-searches have to be made by officers drawing above Rs. 20 and why this Section was not altered when the pay was raised from Rs. 20 to Rs. 45.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

MR. V. SUBBA AIYAR: The Excise Commissioner has brought to my notice that the Regulation requires revision and he has promised to send up the lines on which the Regulation has to be amended. As soon as his recommendation is received, the necessary amendment will be made to Section 28 of the Regulation, so that nobody below the Sub-Inspector will be allowed to conduct house-searches.

PRESIDENT: At 4 P. M. the time allowed for this demand will lapse; and I take it that the House would like to hear the mover and the official members.

MR. J. JOHN NIDIRY: Sir, I rise only to bring a new aspect of the case before the House. We all know something about the temperance movement that is going on in Travancore, and more especially in North Travancore. This is, of course, a movement with which all of us sympathise and ought to sympathise. But with the progress of this movement, I think that abkari revenue will be seriously affected. So, we should try to improve our revenue by some other means. I believe that the House knows full well that an important industry, *viz*, jaggery-making, is slowly dying out in Travancore. In North Travancore, we used to make plenty of jaggery from sweet toddy. Though there is provision for tapping trees for drawing sweet toddy under what is known as the Sweet Toddy Rules, the industry is dying out on account of the rigour of the excise system, and we are thus losing one of the most important industries in the State. We have invested a very large amount in the new sugar industry that is to be established in South Travancore. We should therefore try our best to produce as much jaggery and other raw materials required for the sugar industry as possible, and I think that, for a careful scrutiny in the matter of the working of the Sweet Toddy Rules which requires further development, a better staff of excise officers is required. In this aspect of the matter, I think that a trial may be given to the Sub-Inspector system which is about to come into existence from the next year. From our experience of Mr. Van Ross, we see that he has been conceding wherever possible a reduction of expenditure. But, in this case, he is very insistent; and I think he has sufficient reasons for it. I may tell the House that the Salaries Committee also considered these matters and that they unanimously recommended the creation of Sub-Inspectors. The Committee consisted of three officials and three non-officials.

MR. K. P. RAMAN PILLAI: Sir, I have to inform this House that the latest reorganisation of the Excise Department took place on the 1st Kumbham 1095, when the pay of the Inspector as well as the petty officer was increased. I have been closely listening to the arguments put forward on behalf of the Sub-Inspectors; but I have not been able to find out one single reason why we should convert petty officers into Sub-Inspectors. I have no quarrel with the name at all. Let him be called Extra Assistant Commissioner. (*Laughter.*) My point is that it costs Government Rs. 66,000 and odd. The Deputy President of this Council pointed out to the House that it is the poor-paid officer who gets the major portion of the money. I have to draw the attention of the House

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

[Mr. G. Parameswaran Pillai.]

to the fact that it is only a third of the increase, *viz.*, Rs 20,000, that goes to the poor peons who bear the brunt of the situation. You, Sir, should not be under the impression that some of us on this side of the House are against it. I do not know whether it has come to your notice—the expense that the Government are incurring on a single convict in the Central Jail is Rs 239- 9 chs. 7cash. That comes to Rs. 18 per head per month. I do not grudge to pay Rs. 18 to these low-paid officers so as to prevent them from the temptation to get into that other place.(*Laughter.*)

I want to correct another fallacy which the Excise Commissioner tried to defend. We are now at a demand regarding the Excise Department; and to mix up Salt and Customs now is certainly wrong. From the Administration Report, it will be seen that the actual cost of the department has come to 8·5 per cent., while the cost in British India, as Rao Bahadur A. P. Patro has put it, is nearly 6 per cent. Travancore is spending Rs. 2·4 lakhs more than British India with the costly civil service employed there. Where is the necessity for this? One should have expected at least the Law Member to say what the necessity is for changing the name. The Excise Commissioner has told us that it is for the house-search. Is it because illicit distillation is on the increase? I am sure neither the Excise Commissioner nor the Law Member has told us that illicit distillation has increased. I am sure the Excise Commissioner will not base his case on that argument, because that argument will fall to the ground. In his annual report, he attributes the fall of revenue to anything but illicit practice. He bases it on other grounds. He says that it was due to the low buying power of the people, and to the strict enforcement of the rules and the poor quality of *ganja* obtained from British Indian sources. I was also surprised, rather bewildered, to hear him taking all the credit for the increase of excise revenue. In fact, it is due neither to the overworking of the department nor to any peculiar cleverness on the part of the Excise Commissioner. We find that there is an increase all round.

From the Administration Report for 1096, it is seen that "the increase is due to the increased rentals fetched at the auction of abkari shops, the enhancement in the rates of duty on arrack and tree-tax, and the larger amount realised on account of rebate of duty on *ganja* and gain on opium and *ganja*, etc."

Hence I am sure that he has no right to claim all the credit to himself.

MR. G. PARAMESVARAN PILLAI: Sir, one word by way of reply. I have to point out that the financial question has been confused on the other side of the House. The Excise Commissioner was able to effect a retrenchment by reducing the staff. I say, if the retrenchment be real, let there not be any addditional expenditure to effect that retrenchment. That is arguing in a circle. To say that a retrenchment is to be effected when you appoint additional staff to lighten

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

the work of the Inspectors who have been long indifferent, practically comes to naught.

Then, with regard to the other point that the Commissioner said, on principle, Sir, I very strongly protest against these proposals. The officer remains indifferent for a long time and he applies for an assistant, so much so, that it has become a systematic asking for assistance being given whenever he chooses to leave his work in arrears. I would say therefore that on principle we should not allow such things to go on merely to lighten the work of those officers who neglect their duties.

MR. A. J. VAN ROSS: Sir—

MR. A. HOOGEWERF: Sir, Mr. Van Ross said that the Sub-Inspectors are to replace the petty officers. There are 256 petty officers in charge of parties. There are only 36 Sub-Inspectors provided. How are these 36 Sub-Inspectors going to do the work of 256 petty officers?

MR. A. J. VAN ROSS: As a matter of fact it is not so.

Of a total expenditure of Rs. 8 lakhs, Rs. 2·38 lakhs was the refund of tea duty. The actual expenditure was only 5·84 per cent. whereas in British India the expenditure on abkari alone comes to 5·5 per cent. They have there only abkari, salt and customs, while we have here abkari, salt, customs and tobacco, and yet our percentage is only 5·84. We have so many other things. As regards tree-marking and other matters, I observe that a little more acquaintance with the details of my department will make the point clear. There is considerable loss of revenue to the Government in the matter of tree-marking. If it is not undertaken by a responsible officer, there is considerable loss. I will give you one concrete example.

PRESIDENT: The time alloted for this demand is over.

MR. A. J. VAN ROSS: I oppose the motion.

PRESIDENT: If Mr. Paramesvaran Pillai insists, I would put the motion to the vote.

—The motion was then put to the House and declared lost.

On the motion of Mr. G. Paramesvaran Pillai, a poll was taken with the following result:

AYES—18.

Mr. S. Adam Sait.	,, P. K. Narayana Pillai.
,, T. M. Chidambaratanu Pillai.	,, M. Nilacanda Pillai.
,, A. Govinda Menon.	,, N. Padmanabha Pillai.
,, A. Hoogewerf.	,, Joseph Panjikaran.
,, C. P. Kochukunju Pillai.	,, G. Paramesvaran Pillai.
,, N. Kumaran.	,, K. Paramesvaran Pillai.
,, T. Kumara Pillai.	,, N. Ramakrishna Pillai.
,, V. Kunjukrishna Pillai.	,, K. P. Raman Pillai.
,, M R. Madhava Variar.	,, T. K Velu Pillai.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

[The President.]

NOES—29.

Mr. K. Anantanarayana Aiyar.	Mr. T. Lakshmana Pillai.
,, I. C. Chacko.	,, K. C. Mammen Mappillai.
,, C. J. Curien.	,, John Mackie.
,, Paul V. Daniel.	,, J. John Nidiry.
,, R. Dhanukoti Pillai.	,, P. Paramesvaran.
,, R. Everard.	,, S. Paramesvara Aiyar.
,, K. George.	,, W. H. Pitt.
,, L. C. Hodgson.	,, K. C. Rajaraja Varma.
,, M. K. Khadir Pillai.	,, M. Raja Raja Varma.
Rao Bahadur K. A. Krishna Aiyangar.	,, C. Ramankunju.
	Rao Bahadur. K. V. Rangaswami Aiyangar.
Mr. R. Krishna Pillai.	Mr. V. Subba Aiyar.
Dr. N. Kunjan Pillai.	,, Dominic Tomman.
Mr. Tariathu Kunjitomman.	,, A. J. Van Ross
Rev. Fr. Kuriakose Vettikkapalli.	
Dewan Bahadur Dr. P. N. Lakshmanan.	

The motion was lost, 18 voting *for* and 29 *against* it.

Motions 34 to 40.

The following motions lapsed with the expiry of the time-limit.

MR. G. PARAMESVARAN PILLAI:

34. *To omit the allotment of Rs. 2,197 for upkeep and maintenance of a motor boat.*

MR. T. KUMARA PILLAI:

35. *To reduce the allotment of Rs. 2,38,800 for Ranges by Rs. 5,197.*

MR. A. GOVINDA MENON:

36. *To reduce the allotment of Rs. 2,38,800 for Ranges by Rs. 5,000.*

MR. A. HOOGEWERF:

37. *To reduce the allotment of Rs. 2,38,800 for Ranges by Rs. 100.*

MR. M. R. MADHAVA VARIAR:

38. *To reduce the total allotment of Rs. 3·55 lakhs under Demand IV by Rs. 1 lakh.*

MR. N. PADMANABHA PILLAI:

39. *To reduce the total allotment of Rs. 3·55 lakhs under Demand IV by Rs. 1 lakh.*

MR. K. P. RAMAN PILLAI:

40. *To reduce the total allotment of Rs. 3·55 lakhs under Demand IV by Rs. 41,700.*

PRESIDENT: The question is that a sum not exceeding Rs. 3·55 lakhs *minus* Rs. 3,000, under Demand IV—Excise, be granted.

The grant was made.

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